

### THE CONJOINT BOARD AND THE FIVE YEARS' CURRICULUM.

SIR,—During the last few weeks the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons have had under consideration a scheme of education which it is proposed to enforce when the new five years' curriculum is entered on. Two reports have been issued, one by each of these two bodies; they differ only in certain details; on the main principles of the scheme both are agreed.

In place of the present three examinations, four are suggested. To the first examination elementary biology is to be added, and elementary physiology is to be omitted; it is difficult to see why elementary anatomy should be retained, but we may let this pass. The second examination is to remain practically the same as it is at present. It is when we come to the subjects of medicine, surgery, and midwifery that we find the most radical proposals before us. The present final examination is to be divided into two, one-half of which is to be passed at the end of the fourth year, and the remainder at the end of the fifth. The pathology and book work is to be taken in the first of these two examinations, and the clinical work in the second. How in the name of common sense are these two aspects of disease to be separated? Is the examiner to be debarred from alluding to the appearances of a strumous knee-joint while he may enlarge on the number of bacilli to be found in its interior; or how is he to discuss the symptoms and treatment of stone in the bladder with a candidate if he may not allude to the structure and formation of the calculus? These may appear to be exaggerated examples of what is likely to occur, but they are not so if the regulations which are laid down are anything more than waste paper. And how is the candidate to determine, or how is his teacher to tell him, what are to be the limits of examination in each part of the final? I believe it is quite impossible; and, even if it were possible, the tendency of such a plan would be to check clinical work and not to augment it; for the student would defer his ward work to the year preceding his examination in clinical work.

From conversations which I have had with those who are best capable of forming an opinion on such subjects, I know that many of them are bitterly opposed to it. I sincerely hope that all those who take the very smallest interest in medical education will use their best endeavours to prevent the passing of such a scheme, absolutely untried and absolutely unpractical as it is.

Why, we may well ask, was such a scheme ever proposed? Because (at least, so I am informed) those who are responsible for it thought three years too long to leave a student without examination. Already he is over-examined, and in future I suppose we are to accept the principle that every student is to be harried with examinations to prevent a few idle fellows from getting into mischief, entirely ignoring the fact that the medical schools to which they belong can and do at the present day look after their students.

In reality this scheme has been proposed by those who for the most part have ceased to take part in the active work of the medical schools to which they belong, and who assume that every student is to-day a potential "Bob Sawyer," as too often was the case when they were students themselves. Nothing affords me greater cause for gratification, when I look around at the student of to-day, than the thought of how vastly superior he is in education and in diligence to the student even of less than twenty years ago, but I am no less surprised often to learn how little this fact is recognised by those whose student days date back much further than mine. Quite apart from all such considerations, what could be more ill-judged at the present time than the suggestion of such a scheme of education?

Very shortly, probably by October next, the new university for London will have come into being, and all the better students will be desirous to obtain from it the much-coveted M.D., apart from the other advantages which it will have to offer. It is not for one moment likely that the Council of the University and its medical faculty, which will number a very considerable sprinkling of younger men amongst its members, will accept this brand-new and untried scheme. On the contrary, it is far more probable that the more natural division into three examinations will be accepted. If so, why should the student patronise the colleges for which he will no

longer have any need? It is true that a proviso has been inserted in the charter requiring the graduate of the new university to obtain a licence to practise from some one of the present licensing bodies before the M.D. Albert will be granted him; but to judge from what occurred in the case of the Victoria University, it is unlikely that this proviso will be long insisted on. Even if it should be, the Apothecaries' Hall will find no difficulty in giving a licence to practise, whilst the M.D. and M.S. will be obtainable from the university.—I am, etc.,

Harley Street.

W. BRUCE CLARKE.

### DOG'S SERUM IN THE TREATMENT OF TUBERCULOSIS.

SIR.—In an article by Dr. C. Beretta On the Use of Dog's Serum in the Treatment of Tuberculosis, which appeared in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of November 14th, it is stated that the dog is manifestly refractory to the bacillus of tuberculosis. I do not know upon whose authority that statement is made, but it is certainly erroneous. The canine species possesses no immunity from tuberculosis, and both dogs and cats are frequently the natural subjects of the disease. It is true that until recently these animals, and also the horse, were generally credited by veterinary surgeons with a very strong if not an absolute immunity against tuberculosis, but this mistaken view was due to the fact that the tuberculous lesions in the species named are markedly different from those commonly encountered in cattle. In many cases of genuine tuberculosis occurring in dogs, cats, and horses, the nature of the lesions would remain doubtful were it not for the ease with which the tubercle bacilli can be demonstrated in them. In support of the assertion that tuberculosis is by no means rare in the dog, I need only refer to the fact that Jensen<sup>1</sup> established the existence of the danger in no fewer than fifteen dogs that were examined *post mortem* at the Copenhagen Veterinary College between December 1889 to December 1890.—I am, etc.,

Edinburgh.

J. McFADYEAN.

### HÆMORRHAGIC PERICARDITIS.

SIR,—Will you permit me to add to the condensed report of my paper at the Clinical Society upon a case of this disease (1) that the aspiration was not successful in drawing off any large quantity until I passed a needle to a depth of 2 inches in the left fifth space, mammillary line; (2) that the quantity obtained did not vary from "8 ounces to 2 drachms," but that upon one occasion 22, and upon another 46½, ounces of fluid were withdrawn; (3) observations made *post mortem* were adduced to prove that in some cases aspiration on the right side of the sternum might be absolutely necessary, and that in such cases the best place for puncture appeared to be the fifth space 1 inch from the sternal edge?—I am, etc.,

Leeds.

T. CHURTON.

### IRISH DISPENSARY DOCTORS.

SIR,—I am directed to forward you the following resolution, carried by acclamation, at a large meeting of the Poor-law medical officers of county Londonderry, held in Derry on November 12th:

"That we, the Poor-law medical officers of county Londonderry, hereby tender our most sincere and heartfelt thanks to Mr. E. Hart for the deep interest he has shown in our welfare, and that we pledge ourselves to assist him in every way in our power."

—I am, etc.,  
Londonderry.

J. A. MACCULLAGH, Hon. Sec.

MEDICO-LEGAL CONGRESS IN ITALY.—The teaching of forensic medicine is said to be in a very unsatisfactory state in Italy. With the view of doing something to remedy this defect, the Italian Medico-Legal Society, a new association recently founded at Turin, is organising a congress, which is to be held at Rome in September, 1892. Among the subjects proposed for discussion are: 1. The teaching of forensic medicine in the medical schools; 2. The establishment of similar courses in the universities.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Comparative Pathology and Therapeutics*, June, 1891.